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ABSTRACT

The authors discuss the trend emerging from organizational research which shows in part that administrators are more effective as they are perceived to be considerate of their subordinates. Based on field observations and on the contention that (in an era of increasing collective behavior on the part of teachers) hostility might take the form of increased teacher militancy, five hypotheses were developed and tested in their null form. Results on two of the hypotheses indicate no relationship between teacher militancy and either representative- or punishment-centered rule administration. Results on two other hypotheses leave little doubt, however, that when elementary principals are perceived by teachers as being representative-centered in their rule administration, they are also perceived as having high leadership; and likewise that when they are perceived as being punishment-centered they are also perceived as having low leadership behavior. Results on the fifth hypothesis confirm that teacher militancy declines as the perceived leadership of the principal increases. (Author)

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THE EFFECT OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S RULE ADMINISTRATION BEHAVIOR ON STAFF MILITANCY AND LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR

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Purpose of the Study

It was the purpose of this study to investigate the relationship between elementary teachers' perceptions of the professional leadership of their principal, his administration of rules and their own militancy.

Conceptual Framework

The notion that organizations must be concerned with employees' goals, that organizational goals are better met as they can be made congruent with individual employee needs, and that administrators are more effective as they are perceived as considerate of their subordinates is perhaps the most consistent trend emerging from organizational research. From the work of Mary Parker Follett (Metcalf and Urwick, 1940), Chester Barnard (Barnard, 1938) and Roethlisberger and Dickson (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1938), to the more recent work of Argyris (Argyris, 1964), and McGregor (McGregor, 1967) to mention but a few, this theme emerges in all types of work groups. Of particular significance to education in this regard is the work of Halpin (Halpin, 1959) and Gross (Gross and Harrath, 1965).

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Building on these notions Lutz and Evans (Lutz and Evans, 1968) conducted a field study in New York City to determine if Gouldner's topology (Gouldner, 1954) which classifies administrative behavior into three types of rule administration (punishment-centered; mock-centered; representative-centered) could account for the leadership climate of the school as perceived by teachers. In the Gouldner and Lutz studies mock behavior was defined as the administration of rules imposed upon the school by outside constraints (such as the Board Rules and the contract) that were jointly ignored by the principal and teachers. Punishment behavior was the administration of rules initiated by one or the other group (either the employees or the administration). Which ever group initiated the rule, the other group attempted to evade it while the initiating group used punishments to enforce. Representative behavior was that classification of rule administration typified by the joint initiation or modification of rules; both parties (employee and administration) supported conformity to the rule and attempted to enforce the rule, but through explanation and understanding of the rule.

It was the major assumption of the field study that occasions of representative and mock rule administration would engender positive feelings about the principal, a generalized school climate that was positive, warm and friendly and that teachers would perceive such principals to be high in "executive professional leadership." (Gross and Herriott, 1965)
On the other hand it was assumed that occasions of punishment-centered rule administration would produce hostile feelings and that when punishment rule administration is the typical administrative behavior in a school the generalized school climate will be hostile and cold and teachers will perceive the principal as low in "executive professional leadership."

The field study generally substantiated these assumptions. The major modification was the fact that both representative and punishment centered principals exhibited mock rule administration but no principal operated in the majority of instances on a mock basis. Further, it was discovered that mock type of administration operated in mirror fashion, reflecting the predominate other type of rule administration; either representative or punishment. Thus the same type of mock administrative behavior may be perceived by teachers in a school with representative rule administration as warm, friendly and supportive while that behavior in punishment rule administration schools is perceived as, "Let's wait and see--you can never trust that guy!" Finally, it was discovered that no administrator could, or at least did, operate completely without some punishment type rule administration. When on rare occasions such punishment behavior occurred in generally warm and friendly climates, a certain amount of hostility was momentarily generated.

Based on these field observations and the contention that in an era of increasing collective behavior on the part of teachers that hostility might take the form of increased teacher militancy, the following hypotheses were developed for testing in this study:

H_1 There is a relationship between the teachers' perception of the principal as operating a punishment-centered rule administration and high teacher militancy.

H_2 There is a positive relationship between the teachers' perception of the principal as operating a representative rule administration and low teacher militancy.

H_3 There is a positive relationship between the teachers' perception of the principal as operating a punishment-centered rule administration and their perception of him as exhibiting low professional leadership.

H_4 There is positive relationship between the teachers' perception of the principal as operating a representative centered rule administration and their perception of him as exhibiting high professional leadership.

H_5 There is a positive relationship between the teachers' perception of the principals' professional leadership style and teacher militancy.

These hypotheses were tested in their null form using the following sample, instruments and design.

Method

Sample - Five school districts in Pennsylvania were selected for the purpose of collecting data in this study:

District A - Over 100,000 population; highly industrialized; urban; AFT contract.

District B - About 50,000 population, industrial, suburban, NEA affiliate contract.

District C - About 50,000 population, semi-rural-suburban area; few labor problems.

District D - 10,000 population; slightly industrial; rural area; operated without contract during first year of state's public employees law.

District E - 17,000 population; very rural; one of the last districts in state to begin to negotiate with teachers.

Eighty elementary teachers were randomly selected from each of these five districts, thus a total of 400 elementary teachers comprised this sample; 64.5 percent useable returns from this sample were obtained.

Instruments - Carlton's Militancy Scale (Carlton, 1967) was used to measure teacher militancy. This scale has a reported (split-half) reliability of .82 .

The Executive Professional Leadership Scale (Gross and Harriott, 1965) was used to measure the teachers' perception of the principals' leadership. This scale was produced using the Guttman scaling technique and has a reproducibility coefficient of .978.

In order to measure the teachers' perception of the rule administration of a school, a Rule Administration Scale was developed by McDannel (1973). This scale was developed using the Guttman scaling technique for each sub-scale /(1) punishment, (2) representative and (3) mock centered behavior/ resulting in reproducibility coefficients of (1) .913, (2) .879, and (3) .875, respectively. This instrument is attached in Appendix A of this paper.

Design - Each of the five theoretical hypotheses were tested in their null form using Pearson produce-moment correlation in order to determine the relationship predicted was statistically different than zero. In all cases the .05 confidence level was required in order to reject the null hypothesis.

Data Analysis

Hypothesis #1 - predicted a relationship between punishment-centered rule administrator and high teacher militancy. A correlation of .012 was obtained which is not significant at the .05 level. The null hypothesis was therefore not rejected.

Hypothesis #2 - predicted a relationship between representative-centered

rule administration and low teacher militancy. A correlation of -.074 was obtained which was not significant at the .05 level. The null hypothesis was therefore not rejected.

Hypothesis #3 - predicted a relationship between punishment-centered rule behavior and a teacher perception of low professional leadership. A correlation of -.139 was obtained. Being significant at the .002 level tne null hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis #4 - predicted a relationship between representative-centered rule behavior and a teacher perception of high professional leadership. A correlation of .186 was obtained. This is significant at the .003 level and the null hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis #5 - predicted a relationship between the teachers' perception of the principal's professional leadership and teacher militancy. A correlation of -.126 was obtained, significant at .042. Again the null hypothesis was rejected.

Additional Analysis. Although no relationships were predicted, an analysis was run in order to discover if any relationship existed between the types of rule administration. We were interested in seeing if principals who exhibited one type of rule, administration behavior, might also tend to exhibit some other type. These hypotheses were developed, not tested. Relationships were found between all three pairs but not exactly as we would have originally guessed. The relationship between punishment and mock-centered was positive but was slightly higher than the usually acceptable level for hypothesis testing (.057). There was a positive relationship between punishment and representative-centered behavior at the .002 level. Of particular interest is the fact that there is a .189 correlation between mock-centered behavior and leadership based on these data.

This is significant at the .002 level and was confirmed in a study of secondary school principals (Caldwell and Spalding, 1973), also reported in this session. Surprisingly to these investigators, there was a negative relationship between representative and mock-centered behavior, significant at the .047 level. These findings indicate the following as plausable hypotheses:

1. Elementary principals who are perceived as representative-centered in their rule administration are also perceived as exhibiting little mock-centered behavior.
2. Elementary principals who are perceived as representative-centered in their rule administration are also perceived as exhibiting a considerable amount of punishment-centered behavior as well.
3. Elementary principals who are perceived as exhibiting punishment-centered behavior are also perceived as exhibiting representative-centered behavior as well.
4. Mock rule administration is, in itself, perceived as low leadership on the part of the principal.

Discussion

Militancy and Rule Administration

It is best to first dispose of the fact that hypotheses 1 and 2, dealing with teacher militancy, could not be rejected in their null form. No relationship between teacher militancy and either representative or punishment-centered rule administration was found. Perhaps the first question to be asked is, are we committing a type II error and why might this be so?

During the field study upon which this present study was based some relationship between rule administration and some types of militancy was observed. So the hypotheses had some amount of "grounding" (See Glazer

and Strauss, 1967, on grounded theory). But we failed to state the conditions clearly enough. While punishment-centered administrators and hostile teachers harassed each other incessantly, this did not mean teachers in representative-centered schools were not militant. Likely they were but their needs were met in a less hostile fashion. In fact, an open administrator who was representative-centered had been observed to "invite" a grievance in order to clarify matters for both sides. Thus, it is likely that certain kinds, not all kinds of militant activities are related to punishment-centered rule administration and other kinds related to representative-centered administration.

Another factor that may be very important, not only to this research but to future research in negotiations is the question of the present validity of the Carlton Scale for measuring teacher militancy. There is a tendency for educational researchers to use whatever is available to measure the variables with which they are dealing. We must admit to some degree to such expediency. We were aware that Carlton had done a reasonable job of building the scale and getting reliability data on it. In addition, the fact that it has often been used since tends to give the scale a "homespun" face validity. If we all make the same mistake we are reluctant to tell on one another. But we knew, or at least felt, there was some question as to whether or not Carlton's Scale was still valid. Carlton's Scale was developed early in the teacher militancy era. Many changes in social attitudes, professional norms, state statute and teacher behavior have taken place. A Type II error could be due to the use of an outdated, and thus invalid instrument. For our part we will do a re-evaluation of the militancy scale before we use it again. This is no criticism of Carlton, rather a criticism of our expediency.

Leadership and Rule Administration

This was the major concern of this research and hypotheses 3 and 4 were more firmly grounded in the field research. Both of these hypotheses were rejected in their null form well below the required .05 level. There should be little question that when elementary principals are perceived by teachers as being representative-centered in their rule administration, they are also perceived as having high leadership (at the .003 level of confidence). Likewise when they are perceived by teachers as being punishment-centered in the rule administration they are also perceived as having low leadership behavior (at the .002 level of confidence). Perhaps such evidence will be a greater help in developing leadership in principals. For some time we have known that initiation and consideration are components of leadership. But the question of how the principal can operationalize these concepts has been more tenuous. Inasmuch as we know principals must administer rules at the building level, it should be helpful to know that the way he performs that job is related to his leadership as perceived by the teachers in the school he administers. Just as some scientists take the position that a tree that falls in a forest where nothing can hear it makes no noise (operationally), we take the position that leadership, unperceived by followers, is no leadership at all.

Leadership and Militancy

Hypothesis 5 was rejected with a .045 confidence level. The higher the perceived leadership of the principal, the lower the teachers' militancy. But which influences the other? We do not know. Do teachers who are not militant perceive the same principal as a more effective leader or does a more effective leader reduce the militancy of the teaching staff? Likely the answer to both questions is yes--but we do not have the

necessary data. That question will have to await future research and a better militancy instrument.

Operational Educational Implications

1. Again we have demonstrated, at least to our satisfaction, that the most useful research is one in which they hypotheses are firmly grounded by careful field research. Other hypotheses tend to produce "no difference" findings and permit speculation about Type II errors.
2. There are at least two sets of rules (board rules and union contract) that principals must administer in his daily interactions with teachers. The way they administer these rules will have an important influence in their perceived leadership role and thus in their ability to influence and affect the education that goes on in the school. At a time when principals are losing much of their old power and prerogatives, new areas that provide opportunities for leadership become increasingly important. Principals who seek to provide educational leadership will be well advised to exhibit representative-centered rule administration.
3. Based on these data, elementary principals who exhibit high representative-centered rule behavior also exhibit punishment-centered behavior. They exhibit little mock behavior, however. This pattern appears to be most acceptable to teachers, resulting in the highest perceived leadership.
4. On the other hand, principals perceived as punishment-centered do not seem to be perceived as exhibiting consultant mock behavior and their representative behavior (if it exists) do not seem to help much in improving the teachers' perception of their leadership style.

"Running a tight ship" does not seem to profit a principal's perceived leadership. Remembering that leadership, unperceived by followers, is not leadership at all, we do not recommend punishment-centered rule behavior to principals who wish to exercise educational leadership.

5. Principals who generally ignore rules (mock-centered rule administration) are perceived as exhibiting low executive professional leadership. Apparently teachers expect some task orientation from leaders. Representative type behavior is best but no effort to enforce organizational thrust is in fact no leadership. This finding seems consistent with leadership studies concerned with consideration and initiation dimensions of leadership behavior.

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